

been, my partner in any sense of the word." He declines to comment on his clients, except to say that the government didn't attempt to interfere with his representation of them.

Mr. Tinsley's lawyer, Mr. Sharpstein, says his client brought Mr. Forman into the case because he had worked with Mr. Forman when the latter was a federal prosecutor and then as a defense attorney. "He trusts Forman and still believes in him," says Mr. Sharpstein.

As for the financial arrangements, Mr. Sharpstein says Mr. Tinsley had no idea Mr. Vega was receiving money from traffickers, and wouldn't have allowed it had he known. Mr. Tinsley's understanding was that Mr. Vega would receive a percentage of the value of assets seized by law enforcement, a more-traditional method of compensating informants, says Mr. Sharpstein. "Unfortunately," he adds, "it's not in writing."

Apart from the controversy over money, Mr. Vega's wheeling and dealing caused rising tension in the law-enforcement community. Under a 10-year-old program, all cooperation agreements with major drug traffickers are supposed to be cleared through the Justice Department's secretive "Blitz Committee" to ensure that criminals don't pit one agency or prosecutor against another in search of the best deal. A senior committee member declines to comment on Mr. Vega.

But federal agents outside Mr. Tinsley's small DEA group grew increasingly upset as Mr. Vega breezed through their turf. One was Ed Kacerosky, a driven and highly decorated U.S. Customs agent known for his work leading to the 1997 indictment of the Cali cocaine cartel.

#### \$60 MILLION FOR VISAS

Now a supervisor in the agency's Miami office, Mr. Kacerosky didn't take it well when Mr. Vega tried to help the daughter of late Cali drug lord Jose Santacruz obtain U.S. resident visas for her family. At a meeting brokered by Mr. Vega and attended by Mr. Kacerosky and other U.S. officials, Sandra Santacruz offered to give the U.S. half of some \$120 million her family held in accounts around the world in exchange for the visas, say U.S. officials. The U.S. turned down the offer.

Last year, Mr. Kacerosky became enraged upon learning that Mr. Vega had approached Miguel Rodriguez Orejuela, a former leader of the Cali cartel, in a Colombian prison. People familiar with the matter say Mr. Vega offered to help Mr. Rodriguez Orejuela's son William—under indictment in Miami on U.S. drug charges—in return for information on possible high-level Colombian police corruption.

Mr. Kacerosky, these people say, blames William Rodriguez for the brutal 1995 torture and killing of the wife of a key informant. After the prison meeting, these people say, Mr. Kacerosky wrote an eight-page memo to his superiors sparking the investigation of Mr. Vega.

Mr. Vega's activities also played into a growing feud between the DEA's Bogota detachment and Mr. Tinsley's Miami-based crew. The Colombia-based agents largely responsible for last year's Millennium indictment were unhappy that the alleged criminals they had long been stalking were working out deals with Miami-based agents appearing to poach on their turf with Mr. Vega's help.

Hearing on Oct. 21, 1999, that Bogota-based DEA agents were heading for Panama to crash the Miramar dealer summit, Mr. Vega

says he and Mr. Tinsley cleared the traffickers out of the hotel for fear of their arrest.

"There's a common distrust between DEA Bogota and DEA Miami," says Mr. Sharpstein, Mr. Tinsley's lawyer. "The Bogota agents were jealous of Miami agents racking up these cases."

Today, Mr. Vega is officially off limits to U.S. law enforcement. When the FBI charged him in March, authorities froze a Miami bank account in his name containing \$1.5 million. Though most condemn Mr. Vega's alleged illegal enrichment some agents believe his fall is undeserved after such a long career in a world whose common coin is often a violent death.

As fear and controversy swirl around him, Mr. Vega sits in his Miami Beach penthouse, wearing an ankle monitoring device and fielding phone calls from models in Greece and designers in Paris. "I will be in Miami for the rest of the season. Same place, same apartment," he tells a model who calls to commiserate, "I have a bunch of pictures for you. They used the one with the bathing suit. It looks very nice."

### THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S CHILLING WINTER FORECAST

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 8, 2000*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, as we enter the winter months, the Energy Information Agency of the U.S. Department of Energy (EIA) delivered the cold facts on December 6th in its "Short-Term Energy Outlook for December 2000." The bottom line is that prices for home heating oil and natural gas will rise this winter—considerably.

While the EIA's report is written in approximations, averages, and technical language, its message resonates loud and clear with our constituents and those residing in the Northeast—that their heating oil bills may increase by more than 33 percent from last winter. Furthermore, it is predicted that those whose homes and businesses are heated by natural gas are likely to see an increase of 50 percent in their utility bills this winter over last winter's.

The reasons EIA give for the projected increases are: lower than average heating oil and natural gas reserves, an increase in demand versus available supply, and the onset of colder weather, earlier in the season. The American Gas Association reports that while exploratory drilling for natural gas has tripled over the past year, it will take another year or more before that gas will make its way into the marketplace. Another factor effecting home heating oil prices, a distillate of crude oil, is the relatively high price per barrel of crude. In this regard, our dependency on foreign oil, specifically from the OPEC nations, hurts us.

Mr. Speaker, the situation with OPEC is not any new issue. Our House International Relations Committee as well as the Government Reform Committee have held hearings on OPEC and their affecting the exorbitant costs of energy. I have called upon President Clinton, Secretaries Albright and Richardson, and to OPEC Ministers before their meeting last September urging their assistance. The theme

was the same, the price of energy is too high and is hurting our nation and others, and it must come down.

While OPEC has agreed to increase production, it is difficult to ascertain by how much and what effect that increase will make on the price of oil. Thus far, the price of imported crude oil remains over \$30 per barrel, and OPEC's increase in production has done little or nothing to stabilize the prices for heating oil, or significantly reduce the price per barrel of imported crude oil to an acceptable level for both consumers and producers. The oil market remains volatile and prolonged cold weather could easily result in prices soaring to the \$40 per barrel, ten-year highs of a few months ago. This is substantiated by EIA's following statement.

The EIA states: "unless the winter in the Northeast is unusually mild or world crude oil prices drop significantly, the projected high prices for heating oil will continue until next spring." The EIA further reports that, "a risk exists this winter for distillate fuel (home heating oil and diesel fuel) price spikes similar to what happened last February, especially if the weather stays unusually cold in the Northeast for more than a few days." The EIA once again underscores that mother nature plays a significant role in determining the price of energy.

Mr. Speaker, the next Administration must create and implement a strategic, coherent, forward looking short and long-term energy policy that takes winter weather into consideration when formulating a national policy. Notwithstanding the current Administration's failure to enact an energy policy that makes sense for the American people, there are short-term measures that we can take to make our homes more energy efficient this winter.

Regardless of how our houses are heated, there are certain steps that can lower the cost of our heating bills: checking doors and windows for leaks and drafts; wrapping the hot water boiler with insulated material; clean filters on forced air furnaces; making sure that fireplaces are clean and working efficiently, and if they are not being used, making sure that the flues are sealed; installing a programmable thermostat, and caulking and adding weather stripping where needed.

Mr. Speaker, as the price of energy continues to rise, no one should have to decide whether to feed their family or to heat their home. There are programs such as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), for which I have been a strong advocate. LIHEAP is designed to assist our low income families with the costs of energy. As the Department of Health and Human Services states, depending on the LIHEAP grantee, LIHEAP can be used for: heating assistance, cooling assistance, energy crisis intervention, and weatherization and other energy-related home repairs. If constituents are having trouble paying for the high costs of energy, they should not hesitate to contact their Member of Congress to find out if they qualify for LIHEAP assistance.

While the EIA projects that the price of energy this winter may rise by as much as 50 percent, it is important for our constituents to know that no one should have to choose between eating or heating.